

Protect Yourself From Identity Theft

Identity theft happens when someone steals your name, address, telephone number, bank account or credit card number, Social Security number (SSN), or other personal data and uses it for financial gain. Identity thieves may open credit card or bank accounts, apply for loans, receive medical care, or even give a stolen name to police during an arrest. These simple steps may help protect you from identity theft:

- ▶ Keep your financial records, ID, and credit or debit cards in a secure location. The sad truth is that in many cases, a roommate, family member, or worker with access to the home is the perpetrator of identity theft.
- ▶ Deposit outgoing mail at the post office or an official collection box. Collect your incoming mail promptly.
- ▶ Shred all sensitive information, including credit offers, insurance forms, medical statements, checks, and bank statements. Destroy canceled or expired credit or debit cards.
- ▶ Only bring essential ID and credit or debit cards when you travel, shop, or run errands. Leave the rest at home.
- ▶ Never provide your SSN unless absolutely necessary. If you must provide it online, make certain the website is secure (look for https:// in the URL line).
- ▶ Use a combination of letters and numbers when creating passwords. Change them on a regular basis.
- ▶ Keep the virus protection on your computer up-to-date. Never download files sent by someone you do not know or click links in unsolicited e-mails. Remember to wipe the hard drive before disposing of a computer or external drive.
- ▶ Use a password to protect your smartphone, tablet, or computer from unauthorized access.

LifeMatters offers resources to assist with recovering from identity theft. Call anytime.



**IDENTITY
THEFT**

Call **LifeMatters®** toll-free anytime. **1-800-634-6433**

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TDD and language translation services are available

Call collect to **262-574-2500** if outside of North America

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Source: Nolo Legal Press

